

Sh(It) Gets Stranger by orphan_account

Category: IT - Stephen King, Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Gen, alright lets hope i don't fuck this up, also richie and mike are twins!! hense the losers are here, and the demogorgon is an inter dimensional demon who can shapeshift, but like the gist is mike (009) and stan (010) are experiments like eleven, but yeah, it feeds off fear like pennywise and can shapeshift, they're refered to by their numbers for the first few chapters, this is a stranger things/It 2017 crossover bc i suck and wanted to be cool

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Dustin Henderson, Eddie Kaspbrak, Eleven (Stranger Things), Lucas Sinclair, Mike Hanlon, Mike Wheeler, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris, Will Byers

Relationships: Bill Denbrough/Stamley Uris, Mike Hanlon/Ben Hanscom, Mike Wheeler/Will Byers, Richie Tozier/Eddie Kaspbrak, there aren't any in this really it's more just kids bein buds but there's like . Hintings at

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Summary:

In the town Hawkins, Indiana, children start disappearing out of nowhere. The missing children including Will Byers and Georgie Denbrough. It might have something to do with that lab at the edge of the woods, but no one can be sure. It's up to a club of losers and a D&D party to save their friends and uncover the evil that lives in their town.

1. Prologue

Author's Note:

hello hello!! this is my first stranger things and my first It fic so i hope y'all like it!! i've been really lovin this idea lately so i hope u do too!! feel free to leave feedback!!

(also just so the story is less confusing: 009 is mike hanlon and 010 and stan uris and 011 is eleven (jane), they will be going by their numbers for a few chapters)

Every town has a secret, even if sometimes everyone knows about it. Some towns have a mayor that's gay, some have meth labs on every street, others have the mafia running the politics. However, Hawkins' secret was one no one knew about.

In the town of Hawkins, Indiana, there's a lab hidden in plain sight. In this lab, there's experiments that makes stomachs drop and palms sweat. There's military weapons made of human flesh that could kill whole armies, and they're all 13 years old.

None of the experiments have names, only numbers. There have been up to 11 of them. Some have escaped, others have died, the rest had their brains got reduced to mush and had to be put down. This doesn't stop the scientists from continuing their work.

There are three weapons left in the facility; 009, 010, and 011.

009 is the oldest of the three at the grand age of 14. He has hair shaved to his scalp, just like the other two. He has a strong jaw and soft eyes, and if he had the choice, he would never hurt a soul. 009 has hyper empathy, meaning he can feel what other people are feeling and can force those feelings to change. For instance, if someone is crying, he can focus on them and make it so they are calm or happy. Or, for what he's intended to be, he can take a politician and force them to be angry enough to start a war.

010 is the quietest of the experiments, never once having spoken a word. When his hair grows a bit too long it curls into tight corkscrews. His face is pointed with wide, terrified eyes. 010 can sense body heat from up to 50 ft away. He can see it like normal people can see a memory. When he closes his eyes the warmest things are in reds and oranges, while the rest is in blues. If he focuses hard enough on a heated object then he can see what it is. He's a human radar, meant for battle.

011, the youngest of the three, is also the deadliest. She's small with dark eyes and a soft face. She's the only one of the three who's actually killed someone. What 011 can do is along the lines of what 010 can do, but with a higher success rate. While 010 can sense people around him, 011 can find people anywhere using only a photograph, as long as she cannot see. She can also move inanimate objects with her mind if she pleases. She could kill a building of men in a night if she needed.

There was another terrible thing that was born in this laboratory, but the directors didn't make it. It happened because 011 was pushed too far. She came in contact with something not of this realm, ripping open a hole in the dimensions in the process.

This 'Thing' that now inhabits our world is something no scientist could explain. When 011 met It, It looked like the head director, Dr. Brenner. He was just standing, staring straight at her. She went and touched it, mind full of questions, but when she touched it, the man changed. It went from 011's caretaker to something she can't describe. It's face ripped open into one giant mouth with it's teeth bigger than her fingers and sharper than needles. It grew, and it's mouth opened, revealing lights that seemed to live in it's throat, and 011 screamed.

As 011 screamed, 009 sat up in his bed, breathing heavy. He was absolutely terrified of something he couldn't see. All he could feel was everyone else's fear. 010 sat in the corner of his room, as far from his door as possible. When he closed his eyes he saw the normal reds that come from groups of people, then something dark blue, something colder than everything else, and it was huge. 010 kept his eyes open until he couldn't anymore.

It came into the lab on October 17, 1983 and left that same day. It arrived, It killed, and It went. over 30 scientists died that night from something none of them could explain. Three days later, two missing ads went up in the paper.

The three experiments had never met each other. None of them knew the other two were in the lab as well. Not until the storm, at least.

On November 7, 1983, Hawkins experienced a citywide power outage. This meant that the labs security was down, and this meant that the weapons' doors were unlocked. All three siezed their chance of escape and slipped out their doors into the halls.

010 and 009 were the first two to meet. 010 was hid in a doorway, searching for enemies. He saw the usual reds but one was... smaller than normal. He focused and felt his nose drip while his head began to throb lightly. It was another person in a hospital gown. He opened his eyes in time for the person to shuffle past. For the first time, 010 spoke.

“You.”

009 whipped around with wide eyes. Both made eye contact, terrified. 010 gestured to his gown by tugging at it with a fist. “Same,” he said.

009 looked at 010's gown, then his own, making the connection. “Same”, he replied.

“Out?” 010 asked. 009 nodded. 010 took a deep breath, then they traveled together.

The two met 011 a little more unexpectedly. She was just stepping out of her room when the two others rounded her corner. Her nose was bleeding. 009 and 010 stared at her in silence.

010 wiped at the blood now drying under his nose. “Same,” he said finally.

011's eyes flickered between the two of them before she responded. “Same.”

The experiments traveled through the halls together. 010 took no hesitations to grabbing the back of the other's gowns when he saw doctors were too close. 009's nose didn't stop bleeding until they were outside, making both of them feel calm and the guards feel too frightened to come towards them.

The trio made it out a side entrance without any confrontations. They stumbled out into the pouring rain, feeling complete shock. The outside was huge. The ground under them was hard, sometimes it even hurt to walk on, and it was incredibly different than the tiles they were all used to. And there were these things, and they were taller than the buildings but not made of metal. Rain fell from the sky hard and fast, soaking through the hospital gowns.

"Wet," 011 said.

009 tilted his head. "Wet?"

011 looked at 010's curling hair. She took 009's hand and placed it on the other boy's head. "Wet."

009 blinked, then began to laugh. "Wet," he said. 009's laughter made the other two grin and giggle.

"Hey!"

The three spun and looked at the doors they had come from. 010 had been slacking on seeing where danger was. The man at the door held up a gun.

Without a second thought, 011 glared and twisted the man's neck. He went down without a sound.

011 wiped her nose and turned to the other two. They stared, wide eyed. She raised her arm and pointed at the surrounding woods.

"Go," she said.

The experiments stumbled over branches and roots. None of them could see in the downpour. 010 kept his eyes closed so he didn't lose the others. Then, suddenly, he saw other red spots. He stopped short and grabbed the others arms.

There were eight shapes at least 30 feet away, all around the same size. They were small, unlike the scientists. He focused on one in particular. This shape had thick glasses with a soaked through jacket and hair curling from the rain. Then 010 heard shouting in the distance. The other two stiffened in fear. 010 squeezed their arms.

“Okay,” said 010.

The weapons stood still as the eight shapes arrived. The flashlight lights washed over them, causing all three to flinch.

No one spoke for a few moments, each group stunned by the other. Then the one 010 had focused on spoke up.

“Who the fuck are you?”

2. The Vanishing of Will Byers and the Discovery of Three Weirdos

Summary for the Chapter:

The kids go searching for Will and find something else entirely

Notes for the Chapter:

this is basically just the first episode but w/ the losers added in, i hope yall like it

oh also the last chapter was kind just the prologue so this is Officially chapter 1

Hawkins, Indiana had had a total of 11 missing persons reports since 1950, with almost all of them being solved within a week. In October of 1983, Hawkins had four missing persons cases, with not one having a lead. The town was in a panic.

The first child to go missing was six year old Georgie Denbrough. Georgie had been out by himself in a rainstorm the day he was reported missing. The police came to the conclusion that he fell down a sewer grate, following the report from their only witness. That made the town sleep a little easier, even if the police still hadn't found Georgie's body.

Georgie went missing on October 18th. Today was November 6th. In the space of those three weeks, three other people had gone missing. All were kids under 17. Hawkins had started locking its doors after dark.

That night there were three boys biking home after sunset. As they left their friend Mike's house, the garage light flickered. No one noticed.

The boys biking home were in a group, disussing their Dungeons and Dragons campaign. Lucas was the first to leave the pack, living only two houses down from Mike. Dustin and Will resulted to racing to

Dustin's house with a comic on the line. Will won.

"I'll take your X-Men 134!" Will hollered to Dustin, speeding past his friend's driveway and toward his own. Dustin stopped at his mail box, out of breath.

"Son of a bitch."

Will rode home alone the rest of the way as always. It wasn't unusual for Will to feel uneasy during his ride, but that night it was worse. It felt like something was right on his heels. Just then, his bike light shut off.

Will glanced at his light, wondering what was wrong. When he looked back up at the road, something was there. It was a man, but not at all like a man should look. Its arms almost reached its knees and its fingers ended halfway down its shins. The creature's skin looked gooey, almost, like it was covered in snot. Will swerved off the road in shock.

Will landed in the woods face down with his bike next to him. He pushed himself up with his hands and looked around. It was there, 30 ft in front of him. Will scrambled up in a panic and ran in the direction of his house.

When Will got inside, he slammed the door shut and locked it. His dog barked at him but Will paid him no mind.

"Mom?" He called. "Jonathan? Mom?"

After finding both their bedrooms empty, Will ran into his living room and looked through the blinds to see if the creature was still out there. He squinted and put his hands around his eyes to see better. He jumped back when he spotted it through the clothesline. It was walking towards the house.

Will's next resort was the phone. He dialed 911 as quick as he could and prayed for someone to pick up. Finally the line picked up.

"Hello? Hello?" said Will. A human didn't respond, but a monster did. The monster responded through the phone with growling, making Will's insides curdle.

Will held the phone to his ear as he watched the front door. His stomach turned to ice as he saw a shadow loom in through the small window. His dog began to bark at it. The chain lock slowly came undone and Will felt his heart in his throat. He dropped the phone and ran.

The shed was the last place Will could think of that was safe. There was a shotgun in there that his dad had tried to teach Jonathan how to use. Will didn't know how to use it, but he was about to figure it out.

Will grabbed the box of bullets, hands shaking out of control. He could barely pick up the bullets to put them in the barrel. He got it eventually, cocking the gun and aiming it at the door. He was shaking so bad he couldn't even aim the it. Then he heard the growling. It was the same growling he heard on the phone, only this time it was behind him.

Will turned to face the creature, gun still in hand. He turned his head up to look it in the eye, seeing his own father stare back. But Will knew it wasn't his father, this thing wasn't Lonnie Byers. It still had it's claws and it still dripped that weird mucus that made it look like it was melting.

"Hey, Will," said the monster with a smile. It was in his father's voice, chilling him to the bone.

"Please," Will begged, barely audible.

The lights went out. When they came back on, Will Byers had vanished.

The next morning Will's friends noticed he wasn't in science. "Do you think he got home okay?" Mike asked the other two.

Lucas and Dustin shrugged as the teacher started the class. Science was just as interesting as always, just without Will to be excited about it with. It kind of sucked, to be honest.

After the bell rang, the three walked up to Mr. Clarke's desk, all beaming.

"Remember, finish chapter 12 and answer 12.3 on the difference between an experiment and other forms of science investigation," Mr. Clarke yelled above the buzz of the class. "This will be on the test, which will cover chapters 10 through 12." He realized no one was really listening and began to trail off. "It will be multiple choice with an essay question." He sighed and turned his attention to the boys in front of him.

"So, did it come?" asked Mike.

"Sorry, boys," said Mr. Clarke. "I hate to be the bearer of bad news but..." The boys slumped their shoulders. "It came!"

The boys and their teacher burst into the closet where they held their AV club meetings. On the desk sat a giant radio. "The Heathkit ham shack," said Mr. Clarke. "Ain't she a beaut?"

While the boys were busy being excited over their radio, the chief of police was talking with the principal. Will's mother had talked to him about Will not being home that morning. The police thought it would be best to talk to the people who saw Will last.

The principal knocked in the door before addressing the group. "Sorry to interrupt, but, may I borrow Michael, Lucas, and Dustin?" The boys' smiles fell when they saw the Chief standing behind him.

All three kept their heads bowed as they went through the hall. It didn't sound like they were in trouble, but school officials do that sometimes so you trust them. Mike just really hoped it wasn't about Will.

All the boys talked over each other when they tried to explain where Will would be. It was completely incoherent.

"Okay, okay, okay," the Chief interrupted. His name badge had the name 'HOPPER' scratched onto it. "One at a time, alright?" He pointed at Mike. "You." Mike nodded. "You said he takes what?"

"Mirkwood," Mike responded.

“Mirkwood?” said Hopper, not knowing what that was.

“Yeah.”

“You ever heard of Mirkwood?” Hopper asked his partner.

“No, that sounds made up to me.”

“No, it’s from Lord of the Rings,” interrupted Lucas.

“Well, the Hobbit,” said Dustin.

“It doesn’t matter!” said Lucas.

“He asked!” said Dustin, defensively.

“He asked!” mocked Lucas. The boys started to argue over each other again.

“Hey! What did I just say?” said Hopper. “One at a damn time. You.”

“Mirkwood,” Mike said again. “It’s a real road, it’s just the name that’s made up. It’s where Cornwallis and Kerley meet.”

“Yeah, alright, I think I know that,” Hopper said to his partner.

“We can show you, if you want,” said Mike.

“I said that I know it!” said Hopper.

“We can help look,” Mike replied firmly. Dustin agreed.

“No,” said Hopper. The boys began to protest. “No. After school, you are all to go home. Immediately. That means no biking around looking for your friend, no investigating, no nonsense. This isn’t some Lord of the Rings book.”

“The Hobbit,” said Dustin.

“Shut up!” said Lucas, reaching across to hit Dustin in the arm. Dustin then hit Lucas, and the whole thing started up again.

“Do I make myself clear?” asked the Chief. The boys stopped fighting.

The Chief stood, looking twice as intimidating as when he was sat down. He spoke again in a colder tone. "Do I make myself clear?"

"Yessir," the boys replied.

"Thank you boys, you're dismissed," said the principal.

The boys left, walking side by side. When they were far enough from the room to be safe, Mike stopped them. "Meet me by the bike rack after school. We're gonna bike to our houses and get supplies, then we meet back at my house no later than 4:30. Got it?"

"Why?" asked Lucas.

"Because, we're gonna find Will."

When the school day finally ended, all the kids flooded to the front of the building. Mike and Lucas were waiting by the bike rack waiting for Dustin.

"Hey, Mikey!"

Mike looked up as his brother approached. "Hey, Rich."

"Bev told me you got chewed out by the principal," said Richie. "What'd you do this time? Jerk off in the bathroom?"

"Lay off, Richie," Lucas interrupted. "We got called down because Will didn't get home last night. His mom can't find him." Mike didn't add anything, just stared at his shoes.

"Shit, I'm sorry, guys," said Richie. Lucas shrugged. Mike stayed silent.

Richie began to get his bike when Dustin showed up with Richie's friend Ben, the new kid. "You guys ready?" he said.

"You guys still doing that nerd campaign?" said Richie.

"No, we're gonna look for Will-" Dustin said, cutoff by Mike hitting him in the stomach. "Ow! What? Besides, we can't do the campaign without Will anyways."

"You're gonna look for him? You guys are the police now?" Richie teased.

"Shut up, Richie. We just want to help find him, that's all. Just like when you and your friends looked for Georgie." The three friends got their bikes out. "See you at home, Rich." The other two said their goodbyes and rode off, leaving Richie and Ben.

"Why are they looking for Will?" asked Ben.

"He's missing," replied Richie.

"Oh," said Ben. "Well, shouldn't we help look? I mean, he's kind of our friend too, right?"

Richie thought on that for a moment, then got on his bike. "You're right, we should. What are the other's up to tonight?" Ben shrugged.

"Well, tell them to come to my house at 5 with a flashlight. We're going Will hunting." and with that, Richie rode off.

Mike, Dustin, and Lucas were all set to look for Will when they heard five sets of footsteps coming down the stairs. The three turned to see Richie and his friends piled at the bottom of the steps.

"Sup, nerds," said Richie. The rest all said a chorus of hellos.

"What the hell are you doing?" asked Mike, annoyed.

"Helping you look for Will, obviously." Each of Richie's friends had a flashlight and a raincoat.

"We don't need your help, Richie," Mike huffed. Richie's friends began to glance at each other.

"It help-helps to have a bi-big group, M-Mike," said Bill, the older brother of Georgie Denbrough. Mike looked at him instead of glaring at Richie.

Mike then turned and looked at Dustin and Lucas to get their input. Both shrugged. "More people is safer, I guess," said Dustin. Mike turned back to the others and sighed.

"Alright, fine. We're going to look over by Will's house in the woods. Do you all have your bikes?"

All five nodded in unison. Mike nodded. "Alright. Let's go find Will."

It took 15 minutes to bike to Will's, especially in all the rain. The one's with bike lights lead the way. They all parked their bike's on the side of the road, already shivering.

"My mom's gonna murder me if she finds out I was out here in the rain," complained Eddie, Richie's smallest friend. His mother was overly protective, which in turn made Eddie develop a phobia of germs. He didn't go anywhere without his fanny pack full of his medications, his inhaler, and hand sanitizer. "If I come home with a cold, she's gonna give me check-ups for three weeks straight."

"Awe, don't be worried, Eds," said Richie. "Besides, I don't even have to be sick for your mom give me a check-up."

"Beep-beep, Richie," said Beverly, the token girl of the group. Her red hair was already stuck to her forehead from the rain. "In case you both forgot, we're here to do something important."

"Alright, we all stay together- and we have to move fast, my mom will notice we're gone after an hour," said Mike to the group. Everyone nodded in understanding. The party progressed.

Everyone took turns shouting Will's name into the woods. They all slipped and slid on the wet leaves, clinging to each other for support. Each one stayed with a buddy; Richie with Eddie, Mike with Lucas, Bill with Beverly, and Ben with Dustin. Mike and Lucas were leading the pack, screaming the loudest.

After 20 minutes of searching, everyone was about ready to call a quits, especially because the rain seemed to be getting worse. Mike convinced them to go foward for 5 more minutes. Someone was out there, he could feel it.

Not even two minutes after that, they found someone, just not who any of them were looking for, Bill included. There were three kids, all shivering and soaked to the bone. Everyone was silent, in shock of the other groups presence. Then, of course, Richie spoke.

“Who the fuck are you?”

The other three looked confused. Eddie punched Richie in the arm.

“Why are you guys out here?” asked Mike. Still no response from the others, only shivering.

“Why are they wearing hospital gowns?” Lucas asked Dustin. Dustin shrugged, staring.

“I think they’re scared of us,” Beverly whispered to Mike. Mike kept his gaze fixed on the three and nodded in agreement.

“Look, um,” he looked back at his friends. “We’re- we’re gonna take you guys back to my house.”

Richie butted in. “Who said they could come to our house?”

“I did,” Mike said to him. He turned back to the other three. “Follow us.”

The party of eight traveled a good five feet in front of the other group. They all followed behind the custer in a single file line.

They all got back to Mike and Richie’s house around half an hour later. The eight were all standing around the other kids who were sat on the couch. They all seemed to sit in height order, all grabbing each other’s gowns. They were still shivering.

“Rich, go get them clothes from the laundry room,” said Mike. Richie and Eddie headed off.

“Where did you guys come from?” asked Beverly. The experiments looked at each other and said nothing. Richie and Eddie returned.

“Alright, clothes for the weirdos,” he announced, giving each kid a pair of pajama pants and an old T-shirt. All three immediately went

to take off their gowns. The rest yelled for them to stop.

"There's- there's a bathroom over there where you guys can change," Mike said, pointing. Everyone's eyes were on the floor. The three filed out of the room.

"What the fuck was that?" Richie whispered.

"Why are they all wearing hospital gowns? The hospital is on the other side of town," said Lucas. "Unless they escaped from Pennhurst."

"Shut up, Lucas," said Mike.

"I'm serious! Why else would they not tell us where they came from?"

"I- I don't know, but-"

"No, no buts. Look, I say we call the police and let them deal with it," said Lucas.

"We can't call the police," Richie said. "If my mom knows we were out there so late, she'll kill Mike, then me."

"Why me first?" said Mike.

"Why does it matter?"

"If my mom finds out I was here instead of Bill's, I won't be able to go to school for a week," said Eddie.

"Alright, so we don't call the cops," said Mike. Lucas opened his mouth to protest, but Mike kept talking. "We'll let them spend the night here. Tomorrow they can ring my doorbell and they can tell my mom they're lost. That way none of us get in trouble."

No one really thought that plan would work, but none of them complained. It was better than getting in trouble.

"Where are we gonna keep 'em?" said Richie after a minute.

“Down here,” said Mike. The three had returned by then, all standing in a line. All their shirts reached their knees and their pants covered their feet. “Why did you give them dad’s clothes?” said Mike.

“Well, I wasn’t gonna give them ours,” said Richie. Mike rolled his eyes.

Mike walked over to address the three new kids. “Look, I’m gonna ask my mom what to do in the morning, but for tonight, you guys are gonna spend the night here.” The three blinked in response.

Eventually everyone left the Wheeler household, leaving Richie and Mike with their guests. The boys were making a blanket fort while the other three sat on the couch. Mike turned to Richie after they finished. “I’m gonna introduce us.”

“Um, My- My name’s Mike,” Mike told the three. He gestured to Richie, who was stood next to him. “And this is my brother, Richie.” Richie waved.

The tallest of the three stood up. He went to Richie and took off his glasses. He then looked between the two, confused. “Same,” he said.

Mike laughed a little. “We’re twins.”

“Twins?” The boy asked.

Mike was taken aback. He and Richie glanced at each other. “Uh, yeah. Twins. Like, we were born at the same time.”

“I’m older, actually,” said Richie.

“Shut up.”

The boy stared. “What’s your name?” said Mike. The boy looked back at his friends. They nodded at him.

The boy held up his left arm, hand slightly curled into a fist, wrist facing Richie and Mike. On his skin were the numbers 009.

“Holy shit, is that real?” said Richie, head tilted to read the numbers.

“Is that your name?” said Mike. 009 nodded.

“Do you guys have tattoos too?” asked Richie. The two held out their wrists tentatively, revealing the numbers 010 and 011.

“Nine, Ten, and Eleven,” repeated Mike. The three nodded.

“Well, we should probably get to bed,” said Richie, visibly uneasy, fake smile plastered on his face. “You guys can sleep on the blankets. We’ll come see you in the morning.”

“Good night, guys,” said Mike as he and Richie traveled up the stairs.

“Good night, Mike,” Eleven replied.

“What the fuck,” said Richie, as soon as the door closed. “Why the fuck are their names numbers? Why do none of them have hair? Why did they not know what a twin was?”

“I don’t know, Rich.”

“You have to tell mom in the morning,” said Richie.

“I know, I will.”

“Good.”

As Mike and Richie got ready for bed, the three downstairs all huddled together. 009 did his best to make the others feel rested, giving himself a headache. Mike made up a plan for tomorrow for him to skip school. It took a while for everyone to fall asleep, but when they did, all that was heard was the rain.

Notes for the Chapter:

how do we feel abt saturday updates?? that cool w/
yall?

3. Mike Wheeler's Day Off

Summary for the Chapter:

Mike takes the day off to learn about the weirdos in his house. His friends aren't too happy about it.

Notes for the Chapter:

tysm for all ur kudos and comments!! sorry this chapter took so long, i had Major writers block. this chapter is a bit longer than the others so enjoy!!

The next morning Mike had almost forgotten last night. The morning was almost normal, but there was a nagging feeling in his stomach. Before long it all came rushing back. He pushed off the covers and forced himself out of bed.

He ran into Richie in the bathroom as he did every morning. Richie said something to him, but the toothpaste in his mouth made it incoherent.

"What?" Richie spit into the sink before responding.

"I said, 'Did you talk to the others yet?'"

"Not yet."

Richie rinsed his mouth and spit again. "Well are you gonna?"

"Yeah," said Mike, though he wasn't entirely confident in himself. Richie nodded and headed back into his room to get dressed.

Before they left for school, Mike snuck downstairs with his breakfast in his pocket. "Hey, guys," He whispered. They were all still sat in the fort Richie and Mike had made for them. "I got you breakfast." He walked over to them and handed them each a waffle. They took them and began to eat. 010 watched the others take bites first before biting his own.

"So, listen, this is gonna sound a little weird, but I need you guys to

go out there.” The three turned their heads to see where Mike pointed. “Then go to the front door and ring the doorbell. My mom will answer, and you’ll tell her that you’re lost and that you need help. But whatever you do, you can’t tell her about last night, or that you know me and Richie. Understand?” He was met with silence. “Really, it’s no big deal. We’ll just pretend to meet each other again. And my mom, she’ll know who to call.”

The three all shared looks. 010 took another bite of his waffle. 011 spoke first. “No.”

“No?” said Mike, confused.

“No,” 011 repeated. She bit her waffle again.

“No... you don’t want my mom to get help?” Mike looked at each of them as they all shook their heads. An idea dawned on him.

“You’re in trouble, aren’t you?” He said quietly. No response, just stares. “Who are you in trouble with?”

“Bad,” said 009. He looked distant.

“Bad?” said Mike. “Bad people?” They nodded. “They want to hurt you? The bad people?”

011 held up a gun to her head, then Mike’s. His eyes widened. “Understand?” said 011.

“Michael, where are you? You’re going to be late,” Mrs. Wheeler shouted from upstairs.

“Alright, I’ll be back just- just stay here, okay? Stay here.” With that, Mike ran up the stairs into his kitchen.

“Where’s Richie?” Mike said to his mother. She was getting her keys out of her purse.

“He already left,” Mrs. Wheeler replied. “And you should’ve too, now hurry up.” Mike rushed to get his things and to be out the door before his mother. He had a slight change of plans.

Mike hid in the trees down the street as his mom's car drove past, her and his little sister inside. After she was out of sight, he biked back to his house.

Meanwhile, 009 had started to explore the Wheelers' downstairs. He was very interested in the spaceships that were in the corner. 010 kept an eye out as 011 fiddled with a radio she found. He spotted someone coming towards the house. "Stop."

009 froze where he was. 011 turned off the radio. 010 focused, then visibly relaxed when he saw who it was. "Mike," he said. The other two sighed in relief.

Just then, Mike walked in the downstairs door. He started to say hello but stopped short when he saw 010's nose bleeding. "Ten, are you okay?" He immediately knelt in front of 010, then went to the bathroom and brought back a handful of tissues. "Here, hold these to your nose and tilt your head forward."

010 gave Mike a puzzled look but followed his instructions. "My sister used to get nosebleeds a lot," he explained.

"Sister?" 010 said. Mike blinked in shock. This was the first time 010 had spoken to him.

"Uh, y-yeah, a sister," said Mike, trying not to seem surprised. It was becoming increasingly obvious that they didn't know what a lot of things meant. "Her name's Nancy. It's like me and Richie, but she'd older than us."

011 put her hand on 010's leg. "Sister," she said. Mike laughed.

"No, Ten's a boy, so you'd call him brother," Mike explained. "But you only call someone your brother or sister if you have the same parents."

"Papa," 011 said quietly, a bit of distance in her voice. 010 looked at her in sympathy.

"Sister," he said.

"Brother," she replied.

Mike watched the two of them for a moment before standing up. "Come on, let's go hang out in my room."

"Do you guys want anything to drink?" said Mike as they reached the top of the stairs. almost immediately the other three began exploring everything they could see. Mike turned to see the others fixated on the T.V.

"Oh, this is my living room," said Mike. "It's mostly just for watching T.V." 011 ran her fingers over one of the knobs. The screen flicked on, causing all three of them to jump. "Nice, right? It's a 22 inch. It's like, 10 times bigger than Dustin's."

009 stared at the screen while 010 and 011 wandered away. 010 ran his hand on the chairs while 011 scanned the family photos on the mantle. She stood on the ledge in front of them to get a better look. She lightly touched the photo of a girl with long brown hair.

"That's my sister, Nancy," said Mike from behind 011. 011 paused for a moment, then looked over the rest. "And that's my baby sister, Holly." She stopped on a family portrait. "And there's all of us with my Mom and Dad." Mike then smiled at a memory. "We had to keep retaking the photo because Richie kept trying to flip off the camera."

The other two had gravitated over to 011, all staring at the pictures. "What are your guys' parents like?" asked Mike. "Do they live close?" No one answered.

010 was the first to lose interest. He stepped off the ledge and went back to touching the chairs. "That's our La-Z-Boy," said Mike. "It's where my dad sleeps." 010 ran his hands on the fabric. "You can try it, if you want?" 010 looked at Mike, then slowly went and sat in the chair. He sank right in. "Just trust me, okay?" 010 just looked at him, but grabbed the armrests in response.

Mike pulled the lever on the side of the chair, making it recline. 010 gasped as he fell back, feeling the chair rock. The others began to laugh. 010 began to laugh too, though he wasn't sure why. He'd rather just sit in the chair normally. "Now you try."

010 looked at Mike cautiously before pulling the handle. He then

immediately grabbed the arms again as it reclined. This time he laughed along with the others because he wanted too.

After they had all taken turns trying the chair, Mike lead them up to his room. The first thing he showed them was his Star Wars action figures. 009 was very intrigued.

“Ready you are? What knows you of ready?” Mike said in his best Yoda voice. 009 laughed in wonder. “His name’s Yoda. He can use the Force to move things with his mind, like this.” Mike pushed some of his toys off the table as an example.

009 looked at 011 and said, “Yoda.”

“Yeah, Yoda. He’s the one who trains Luke Skywalker to be a Jedi,” said Mike, picking up his Luke Skywalker figurine. 011 wasn’t very interested, so she got up to look around.

“And this is my dinosaur, Rory.” 009 took the toy from Mike and examined it. “It has a speaker in his mouth so he can roar.” Mike pressed a button on the back of the toy, causing it to screech. 009 stared in amazement.

Mike looked back to see 011 observing his science fair trophies. He got up to join her. 009 made Rory scream in 010’s face.

“These are all my science fair trophies. We’ve gotten first every year,” Mike said proudly. Then he deflated a bit. “Well, except last year when we got third. Mr. Clarke said it was totally political.” But 011 wasn’t paying attention to the trophies, she was staring at the photo among them.

It was a picture of Mike, two of the others she met last night, and another boy she hadn’t. 011 knew him, though. She knew where he was and she knew he shouldn’t be there.

She reached out and touched the photo lightly, terror creeping into her stomach. 009 felt her fear and looked up from the dinosaur. Mike lit up with hope. “Do you know Will?” 011’s eyes prickled with tears. “Did you see him? Last night? On the road?”

Before 011 could answer, 010 sat up straight with his eyes shut tight.

When he opened them again, his nose had begun to drip lightly. "Mom."

Mike furrowed his eyebrows at him. Before he could ask what 010 meant or why his nose had begun to bleed, he heard tires enter the driveway. Mike's stomach dropped.

"We gotta go."

Mike dragged all three down the stairs to try and reach the basement. Before they hit the bottom of the first flight, Mike heard his mom talking to his sister Holly. He turned and forced everyone back up the stairs.

"Ted?" Mrs. Wheeler called, hearing footsteps. "Is that you?"

In a panic, Mike responded, "It's just me, Mom!"

"Mike? What are you doing home?"

"One second!" Mike burst into his room with the others, looking around frantically. He pulled them over to his closet and opened the door. "In here."

All of them froze in fear. "Please, you have to get in, or my mom-she'll find you," Mike begged. "Do you understand?" None of them moved. "I won't tell her about you. I promise."

"Promise?" said 009.

"It means something that you can't break, ever," said Mike, not exactly in the mood for explaining things.

"Michael?" Mrs. Wheeler yelled up the stairs.

"Please, I'll be right back," Mike whispered. 009 knew what he had to do. He pulled the others in the closet with him as Mike shut the door. 010 and 011 began to breathe heavily. 009 forced himself to be as calm as he could.

In 009's mind he was in that tiled room, alone in the dark, completely horrified. He had done something wrong, and now he was

shoved in that cold room, not able to fix it. No one ever came to let him out, he would always wake up in his room, stiff and sore. Physically, though, 009 was with his siblings in Mike's closet, and that's what he had to focus on. He took a deep breath and forced all his calm into the others.

While this was happening, downstairs in the living room Mike was trying to save his skin. "I just... I don't feel good," Mike said rapidly. "When I woke up my head really hurt, and my throat was all scratchy, and I wanted to tell you, but the last time I told you I was sick you made me go to school anyway, an—"

"Michael," Mrs. Wheeler interrupted.

"Yeah?" asked Mike, nervous. He was fairly confident in his lying, but his stomach still dropped.

"I'm not mad at you."

"No?"

"No, of course not," said Mrs. Wheeler. She sighed, considering her words. "All this that's been going on with Will..." she paused. "I can't imagine what it's been like for you." Mike silently thanked God. "I just, I want you to feel like you can talk to me. I never want you to feel like you have to hide anything from me. I'm here for you. Okay?" Mike nodded. A thud came from upstairs.

"Is there someone else here?" said Mrs. Wheeler.

"No," replied Mike.

As soon as his mom released him he hurried back up the stairs, going in his room and locking the door behind him. "Guys? Is everything okay?"

He opened up the closet door. The three were sitting on the floor. 010 and 011 were breathing evenly, their hands incased in 009's. Mike took one look at 009 and ran and grabbed tissues from his desk. "Nine, are you okay?"

009 was bleeding horribly from his nose and slughtly from his ears.

He head hurt so bad his ears were ringing, and his skin had began to pale. Mike sat in front of him and told him to hold tissues to his nose. Mike began to wipe lightly at the blood coming out of 009's ears. 010 and 011 watched intently.

"What happened?" Mike asked lightly.

009 croaked out, "Scared." He looked up at Mike's confused expression, but didn't have the words to explain further.

Mike called Lucas and Dustin and told them to come over as soon as they could. He was pacing in his room, already knowing what Lucas would say. He heard footsteps approach his room.

"Mikey! Open up!" Richie called.

Mike cursed quietly before opening his door. He pulled Richie in and shut the door again quickly. "Why weren't you at school? What the fuck hap-" Richie trailed off when he noticed the three figures sat on the bed. Richie looked at them, looked at Mike, looked back at them, then turned to leave.

"Rich, wait," said Mike.

"No, I'm not dealing with this. This is a you problem."

"No, it isn't. This is just as much a you problem as it is mine," said Mike.

"Says who?"

"Says the fact that they're in our house!"

"You're the one who brought them here!"

"Listen, just, let me explain-" Mike was interrupted by the doorbell ringing. Mike sighed and left to answer it, leaving Richie with the others. Richie, feeling incredibly uncomfortable, waved. The three waved back.

Mike returned less than a minute later with Dustin and Lucas. They both stared at the strangers. "Are you out of your mind?" said Lucas.

“Thank you,” said Richie.

“Just, listen to me-” Mike started.

“You are out of your mind!”

“Eleven knows about Will,” Mike blurted out.

“What do you mean she knows about Will?” said Dustin.

Mike walked over and picked up the photo by his trophies. “She pointed at him, at his picture,” explained Mike “She knew he was missing, I could tell.”

“You could tell?” said Richie.

“Just think about it,” Mike argued. “Do you really think it was a coincidence we found her and her brothers on Mirkwood? The same place where Will disappeared?”

“Brothers?” said Lucas.

“That is weird,” Dustin agreed.

“And Nine said bad people were after them. I think maybe these bad people are the same ones that took Will.”

“If bad people are after them why the fuck are they still in our house?” exclaimed Richie.

“Because, I think Eleven knows what happened to Will,” said Mike.

“Then why doesn’t she tell us?” said Lucas. He looked at the other three, then marched up to 011. “Do you know where he is?” 009 sat up when he approached. “Do you know where Will is?” Lucas shouted, grabbing 011’s shoulders. 009 shoved him off.

“Stop it!” said Mike. Lucas backed up to Dustin again, eyeing 009 carefully.

“Look, if you know where he is, tell us,” said Lucas, more calm than before. 011 said nothing.

“This is fucking insane, Mike,” said Richie. “We gotta tell mom.”

“No. Eleven said telling any adult would put us all in danger,” said Mike.

“What kind of danger?” said Dustin.

“Their names are Nine and Eleven?” said Lucas.

“Nine, Ten, and Eleven, yeah.”

“Mike, what kind of danger?” repeated Dustin, louder this time.

“Danger, danger,” said Mike. He held a gun to Dustin’s head, then Richie’s, then Lucas’. Lucas swatted Mike’s hand away.

“Nope, fuck that. Fuck that. I’m telling mom,” said Richie, grabbing the doorknob. As he opened it, the door got ripped from his hand, slamming so hard it knocked over things on Mike’s desk. Richie tried again. The door slammed shut and locked itself. All four of the boys looked at the others. 011’s nose was bleeding.

“No,” said 011.

009 was smiling next to her. “Yoda.”

Mike looked between them, piecing things together. When he finally understood, he spoke. “Yoda.”

The three siblings stayed in Mike’s room while the other four ate dinner. Everything went fine without any distractions. The brothers were occupied with Mike’s toys. 011’s mind was stuck on Will.

The main struggle afterwards was trying to sneak everyone into the basement. Richie distracted Mrs. Wheeler by begging her to let Bill come over, calling him after he finally caved. Once everyone was downstairs, Richie stole some dinner and joined them.

Richie hopped down the stairs with a plate full of meatload. “Bill’s on his way with the others.”

The three took the food, but watched Dustin, Richie, and Lucas

warily. "They won't tell anyone about you," Mike said. "They promise. Right?"

"We never would have upset you if we knew you had superpowers," said Dustin. Mike punched him in the arm.

"What Dustin is trying to say is that they were just scared," said Mike. "That's all."

"We just want to find our friend," said Lucas.

"Friend?" said 011.

"A friend is someone that you'd do anything for," explained Mike.

"You lend them your cool stuff, like comic books and trading cards," added Dustin.

"And they never break a promise," finished Mike.

"Especially when there's spit," said Lucas.

"Or blood," said Richie. Mike made a face at him.

"Spit?" said 009.

"A spit swear means you can never break your word." Lucas spit in his hand and shook Dustin's. The three leaned back in disgust, as did Dustin.

"That's super important, because friends tell each other things. Things that parents don't know," said Mike.

010 turned his head toward the door that lead outside and spoke softly. "Others." There was a knock on the door. Richie went over and let his friends in.

"They're still here?" Eddie exclaimed once he saw the siblings. Richie shushed him.

"Keep your voice down. I'm only supposed to have Bill over," Richie told him.

“Why the hell are they still here?” said Eddie.

“If I tell you guys, you have to promise not to tell another soul outside of this group,” said Mike. Richie’s friends all shared glances. “Promise,” Mike said firmly. All of them mumbled an agreement.

“The reason I couldn’t tell my mom is because these guys are in danger,” said Mike.

“Danger danger,” Dustin added.

“What kind of ‘danger danger?’” said Ben.

“Enough to get us killed,” said Dustin.

“Us and our families if we told them,” said Mike. “That’s why this has to stay in this group.”

“Then why the hell are we here?” said Eddie.

“Because, Eleven knows where Will is,” said Mike. “And if she knows where Will is, she must know where Georgie is.” Everyone glanced at Bill then away again, almost ashamed in themselves. Bill stared at him with big eyes.

“Her name’s Eleven?” said Beverly.

“Nine, Ten, and Eleven,” said Mike, pointing to each when he said their name.

“Why the fuck are they named after numbers?” Eddie whispered to Ben.

“Stop,” said 010. Everyone turned to look at him. “Mom.”

“Richard? Is Bill here yet?” Mrs. Wheeler called down the stairs. Eddie snickered at Richie’s full name, earning a punch in the arm.

“Yeah, Mom,” Richie called back.

“Hi, Mrs. Wheeler,” Bill said loudly.

“Did you eat dinner yet, Bill?” Mrs. Wheeler asked.

"I d-di-did, thanks," Bill replied.

"Okay, let me know if you boys get hungry."

When the coast was clear of Mrs. Wheeler, the basement began to buzz.

"How did you know my mom was there?" Richie asked 010.

"He did it earlier when you guys showed up," said Lucas, referring to Richie's friends.

"He did it this morning, too," said Mike. 010 began to shrink in on himself from all the attention.

"Buh-back up, guys," said Bill, noticing 010's behavior. Once everyone was quiet, Bill asked. "Hu-How did you know M-M-Mrs. Wheeler was thuh-there?"

010 watched Bill intensely, then look at the desk in the corner. "Crayons."

"Crayons?" repeated Lucas. Bill went and got the crayons and a piece of paper off the desk.

010 grabbed a bright orange crayon out of the box. He looked around at everyone in the room, then drew several small circles all in a clump. He then drew a few more that were farther away. Then he grabbed a dark blue crayon and shaded in the rest of the page. Finally, he picked up a black crayon and wrote a messy '010'. by one of the dots. He scribbled an '009' and '011' by the dots next to him. He started to write a big 'M' by one of them, then scribbled it out.

"Mike," 010 said, pointing at the spot by the 'M'. He moved his finger to the one right in front of his dot. "Bill." Then he pointed to a dot that wasn't in the clump. "Mom."

"He's like a radar," said Dustin, face full of wonder.

"Can they all do that?" asked Beverly.

"No, Eleven can move thing with her mind," said Dustin.

“No way,” said Ben.

“I’m not sure what Nine can do,” said Mike. They all turned to watch him. He looked around a bit panicked, then settled his eyes on Ben. He got up and went over to Ben, then grabbed his hand. 009 took a deep breath, then felt as calm as can be.

“Oh,” said Ben. “Oh, wow, that’s...that’s...” His voice was completely monotone, and his eyelids were drooping.

“You can make people fall asleep?” Lucas asked. 009 shook his head and let go of Ben’s hand. 009 looked at everyone, then decided on his easiest option. He took a deep breath and closed his eyes.

Slowly but surely, every kid in the room broke out into grins. Dustin was the first to start giggling, everyone joining him soon afterwards. 009 laughed a bit to himself, then opened his eyes. Mike left to get him a tissue for his nosebleed.

“That’s so cool,” Ben said again. 009 smiled at him.

“So if Eleven can move things with her mind, then how does she know where Will is?” asked Beverly.

“I don’t know,” said Mike, voice sounding a bit discouraged. “But she knew. I could feel it.”

“So what, we’re just gonna believe her?” said Lucas. At that statement, 011 stood from her spot at the blanket fort. She walked through the kids to the table top where the Dungeons and Dragons campaign still sat, untouched.

011 sat in one of the seats and looked over the table. She closed her eyes. When she opened them again, 011 picked up one of the pieces. “Will.” Mike’s heart jumped in his chest. Everyone was silent.

011 looked at the game board, then flipped it over to the blank side. She set Will’s piece down in the center of it. Then she picked up a piece that was a creature with three heads, and set it next to Will’s piece.

“What the fuck does that mean?” said Richie.

“Richard! Michael!” Mrs. Wheeler shouted from the kitchen. “You’re friends should be getting home, it’s almost dark.”

Mike addressed the group in a panic. “I can’t keep all three of them here. It’s too dangerous.”

“I-I-I can tay-take Ten,” said Bill.

“Are you sure?” said Mike.

“Yeah. M-My parents won’t no-notice,” said Bill. Everyone got a bit quieter.

“Boys!” Mrs. Wheeler shouted.

“Just a second!” Mike responded. The room began to panic. “Beverly, can you take Eleven?”

Beverly shook her head, panic in her voice. “No, my dad will kill me.”

“I can take Nine,” said Ben. “My dad’s away on business, it’ll be safer.”

Mike nodded. “Okay. Eleven can stay here until we figure things out.” The group nodded in agreement.

Separating the siblings was painful to watch. They hadn’t been together long, but the thought of being apart caused them to panic.

“You guys can see each other again soon,” said Mike. “We promise.”

After 20 minutes of consoling the three, everyone finally went their separate ways. 011 retreated into the blanket fort, obviously in a bad mood. Mike hung out with her for a bit to try and cheer her up.

Bill sneaking 010 into his house was far easier than it should’ve been. It wasn’t even evident that other people lived in his house besides him.

The two boys went into Bill’s room. 010 immediately went over to the bed and began to feel the comforter. Bill noticed how 010’s

clothes were overly baggy and got him some of his own pajamas.

Bill held out the clothes to 010. 010 looked at him in response. "They sh-shou-should fi-fit."

010 took the clothes, sat them on the bed, then went over to the window. Bill assumed he was looking at the sunset. Then 010 pointed. "What is that?" 010 asked.

"Tha-That?" asked Bill. "It's a tree."

010 shook his head and pressed his finger into the glass harder, as if that would make what he was pointing to more clear. "No. That."

"Oh, the bird?" said Bill.

"Bird," repeated 010.

"Yeah, a bir-bird," said Bill. 010 stared at it for a minute more before Bill stopped him. "C'm-mon, let's get ruh-ready for bed."

Ben and 009 had almost the same situation. Ben's mom was at work still, so the house was silent. He got 009 up to his room after getting them both drinks.

"So, do you live around here?" said Ben. He never knew what to say around new people. 009 stared in response. Ben's face flushed.

009 turned his attention to the papers Ben had taped up on his wall. Ben became fustered.

"Oh! Those are- um-" Ben wasn't sure where to start. "I-I was a new student this year, so, I, uh, I spent a lot of time at the library." 009 started too look over all the pictures on the wall. "I was interested in missing kids, so, these are them."

009 was stuck in front of one section of the wall. Ben went over and joined him. His eyes were flicking over the only missing reports that existed in the 1970s. There was only three and they all stopped being covered after only two articles. Ben watched as 009 pointed to one of the articles. Ben looked at the picture attached, then back at 009. "That...That's you, isn't it?" 009 just stared. "Michael."

“Michael,” 009 repeated. He moved his eyes from his article to the one next to it.

“And that must be Ten, right?” said Ben. “Stanley?” He read the next article. “And Eleven must be Jane.”

“Michael,” 009 repeated to himself.

The front door opened down the hall. “Ben? I’m home!” Mrs. Hanscom shouted.

“Hey, Mom!” Ben responded. He turned to Michael. “Listen, I’m gonna go downstairs and talk to her for a bit. I’ll bring you up blankets and stuff, just, don’t make any noise. Please.” Michael nodded, eyes still fixed on the articles.

Ben returned 20 minutes later with blankets and pillows like he promised. He found Michael sitting in front of a the wall, tears of frustration stinging his eyes.

“Michael? What’s wrong?” said Ben.

Michael continued to watch the wall. “Can’t read.”

“Oh.” Ben walked over to him, blankets still in hand. “I could bring you home books from the library tomorrow, if you want?”

“Books?” said Michael.

“Yeah. Um,” Ben set down the blankets and picked up a book off his desk. “Like this. They tell stories or have information in them.” Michael watched it with interest. “I’ll bring home some tomorrow.”

All of the siblings went to bed with their respective host that night. 011 stayed in her blanket fort, now considerably more roomy and far too lonely. 010 slept on the opposite side of Bill’s bed, watching the red dot next to him shift and turn. Michael was on the floor next to Ben’s bed, spelling his name over and over in his head. The next day, Ben had to tell his friends about the names and who the kids were, but for now, everyone had to sleep.

4. Friends Don't Lie

Summary for the Chapter:

names are discovered and so is a body

Notes for the Chapter:

hi everyone!! i'm soooo so so sorry this took so long, the holidays and writers block got in the way. thank you for all the comments and kudos!! if i don't update next weekend, i will try for the weekend after that since i turn 17 this week so i may be busy. thank u for everyone who's stuck around!! hope u enjoy!!

Waking up the next morning was weird for everyone. For 011, it was lonely. Though it had been that way her whole life, it felt empty. It was weird not having her brothers there even if they only knew each other one night. She sat up, listening to the footsteps up the stairs, head rested on her knees. Her stomach growled. Finally, Mike came downstairs.

"Morning, El," said Mike.

"Morning, Mike," said 011.

"Me and Richie have to go to school today, so you're gonna be alone," said Mike. He began to take off his watch. "But, Ben called and said he wants to meet up at the quarry after school." He motioned for 011's arm and put the watch on her wrist. "So I need you to meet me outside by the trees at 3:15."

"3:15?" 011 repeated.

"Yeah. When the watch says 3-1-5," Mike explained.

"3-1-5."

"Yep, 3-1-5." 011 looked at the watch. The minute changed, causing her to blink in surprise. Mike cracked a smile, then stood up. "Okay, please try to stay down here as much as possible. My mom shouldn't

be home, but just in case.” 011 nodded in response, still observing the watch. “Bye, El.”

011 looked up again as the door closed. Her shoulders slumped. After a minute or two, she picked up the small radio she had taken a liking to. She flipped through the channels until a voice came through.

The voice sounded as if it was singing. 011 picked up one of the blankets and put it over her head to block out the light. She concentrated, focusing only on the static and the singing.

When her eyes opened again, she was in the dark. The only other thing there was a boy with long hair and big brown eyes. 011’s heart raced. “Will?” she said.

Will stopped singing and looked up at her. He was shivering, frost starting to form on his hair. “H-Who-Who are y-y-you?”

“Mike’s friend,” 011 replied. Will looked confused. He’s never met her before, how could she be Mike’s friend? “Where are you?”

“M-M-My how-hous-se,” said Will. “A-Are th-th-they luh-looking f-for me?” 011 nodded. Then Will’s head snapped to look at something. Fear formed in her stomach. Will began to shake more violently “I-I-I’ll be-be h-here, hide-hiding.” Will got up and started to back away, still facing 011. “Hurry.”

011 ripped the blanket off her head, breathing heavy. She wiped her nose on her sleeve. The watch on her wrist read 8:56. She didn’t pick up the radio again.

Will’s empty seat became taunting to Mike and his friends. Mike kept his hair in his eyes so he didn’t have to look at it. Lucas would catch himself staring from time to time, forcing himself to look away. Dustin would smile at the others while telling a joke, then turn to Will’s, only to see it empty. His smile would fall after that.

Even Richie and the others didn’t like seeing the empty desk. Bill’s stomach tied itself in knots just thinking about it.

Will was quiet. The kind of quiet that was soft and timid, but would still smile at you in the hall. It was the shy type that liked to listen and help, and it was crucial to the party. Dustin was an overly-passionate type of loud, Lucas loved to argue and spout facts, and Mike was the one to step in and break up the fights or prove both of them wrong. Will would just sit and listen. He would laugh at the jokes he found funny and agree when someone needed backing up. Now that the quietest member was missing, everyone was silent.

The three remaining members of the party sat at their table, all picking at their trays of food. Someone would try to start a conversation from time to time, but it just fell flat. Mike tried not to focus on the empty space next to him too much.

“Hey.” The boys looked up from their food in unison. Eddie and Beverly, Richie’s friends, stood next to the table, lunch trays in hand. “Mind if we sit?” Beverly asked.

The three mumbled a reply. Beverly sat next to Mike, and Eddie next to her. Mike tried not to be upset that they were in Will’s spot.

“So, did Ben call you guys?” said Beverly. Dustin and Mike nodded. Lucas didn’t.

“He doesn’t have my phone number,” said Lucas.

“He wants to meet by the Quarry after school,” Dustin told him. “Something about the weirdos.”

“They aren’t weirdos,” said Mike, defensively.

“What did he have to say about them?” asked Lucas. Mike began to pick at his food more aggressively.

“He has information on them that we should know, I guess,” said Dustin.

“Like what?” said Lucas. Mike stabbed his fork into the mush of lunch food.

“Can we not talk about the siblings in public, please?” said Mike. The rest of the table shared looks before falling silent again.

Before long the group was outside for the remainder of the lunch period. All five were out by the baseball field, looking for rocks. Eddie kept out of the dirt sitting on the steps of the announcer booth. Beverly stood next to him, leaning on the wood.

“Why are you guys looking for?” asked Beverly.

“Rocks to fight the demogorgon,” said Dustin.

“The what?” said Beverly.

“The monster Eleven said was after Will,” Dustin explained. Beverly looked at Eddie. Eddie shrugged, saying it was a nerd thing.

“So do you think the siblings were born with their powers, like the X-Men,” said Dustin, face to the ground, still searching. “Or do you think she acquired them, like Green lantern?”

“They’re not superheroes. They’re weirdos,” Lucas butted-in.

“Why does that matter?” said Mike. “The X-Men were weirdos.”

“Look, I’m just saying, they’re pretty weird,” said Lucas.

“Shut up, Lucas,” said Mike.

“Yeah, shut up, Lucas,” a voice mocked. The three turned to see Troy and his friend James approach them. Beverly and Eddie looked up from their conversation. “What are you idiots doing back here?”

“Probably looking for their missing friend,” James laughed.

“That’s not funny,” said Dustin. “It’s serious. He’s in danger.”

“I hate to break it to you toothless, but he’s not in danger. He’s dead,” said Troy. “That’s what my dad says.” Beverly stood up straight from her spot by the booth, crossing her arms. Eddie got up and stood next to her. “He said he was probably killed by some other queer,” Troy said, him and James laughing.

“Fuck off, Troy,” said Eddie. Troy turned to him, grinning.

“And there’s one now!” said Troy. He walked over to Eddie. “Better be careful, Kaspbrak, you might be next. After all, they already got B-B-Billy’s brother.”

“Do you really not have anything better to do?” said Beverly, getting the attention off Eddie before he started getting physical.

“I could do something with you,” said Troy. This time Mike was the one to step in.

“Come on, let’s just ignore them.” Mike began to walk away. James stuck his foot out, tripping him.

“Watch where you’re going, Frogface,” Troy taunted. Him and James walked away. Dustin and Lucas helped Mike up. Mike rubbed at his chin. Lucas asked if he was alright.

“Hey,” Dustin said. He picked up the rock Mike hit his chin on. “How about this one?” The three grinned and agreed.

After the last bell rang, everyone flooded out of the building. Each kid made their way to the bike rack, anxious to talk with the others about what was going to happen this afternoon. Ben hadn’t given them any indication of what he had to share, just that it was important, and that all the siblings had to be there.

Ben was the last one to join the crowd around the bikes. He was met with a chorus of hellos. Ben told them to meet by the Quarry at 5:00.

“Why so late?” asked Eddie.

“I have to stop by the library first,” said Ben.

“I-I-I have to, too,” said Bill. He addressed Ben. “I-Is it okay if I come with you?” Ben was fine with it. With everything settled, everyone went their separate ways to prepare for the meet up.

Ben and Bill rode together to the library. Bill followed Ben, since he knew the quickest way to get there. Once the two arrived they left their bikes at the rack and made their way inside. The librarian said hello to Ben, even referring to him as Benjamin. Ben said hello.

The library was Ben's favorite place in all of Hawkins. It had a high ceiling with large paintings on the walls above the shelves. There were tables in the center with wooden chairs that were somehow comfortable, surrounded by shelves of books. It was bland looking yet comforting and homey.

"Are you boys looking for anything in particular?" asked the librarian.

"Yeah, actually," said Ben. "Do you have any kids books?"

The librarian blinked in surprise at Ben's request. "Uh... yes, they're in the back corner." She pointed to the back left corner. Ben said thank you and they headed over.

"Why do you n-need kids books?" asked Bill.

"For Nine," Ben replied. "He said he wants to read. He seems really smart."

The two looked around the kids books for almost half an hour. The shelves were just tall enough for a 5th grader, stuffed with picture books and easy chapter books. Half of that time was spent looking at the books they used to love and reminiscing. Ben ended up picking up three books to see which one Michael liked best.

"What are you here for?" Ben asked, books tucked under his arm.

"I w-was gonna find a bir-bird book for Ten," said Bill. He continued to flip through the books. "He seems to think they puh-pretty cool. I woke up this m-mor-morning to him watching them out the window. It s-scared the shit out of me." Ben laughed.

"Yeah, Nine freaked me out this morning too. It's weird sharing a room with someone," said Ben. Bill agreed with a smile. Ben started to walk away. "C'mon, i know where the non-fiction stuff is."

Another 20 minutes went by before Bill found the perfect bird book for 010. Ben loved this section. The shelves were much taller than the children's section, with books ranging from world record books to books about space to books about turtles from across the world. Most of this time was spent picking out books and either being fascinated

or weirded out. Finally Bill settled on a book about birds around the world that was full of pictures. He figured 010 would appreciate that.

After they check out their books and got to their bikes it was already 4:30. Ben and Bill went to their own homes to get the siblings and head to the Quarry.

Ben walked into his room to find Michael sat on the edge of his bed, staring at the articles. He had tears in his eyes from frustration.

When Mike was presented the books he broke out into a grin. It was enough to get Ben grinning too. "I can teach you the alphabet and stuff, if you need." Michael shook his head. Ben became embarrassed. "If-If there's any words you need help with, then, let me know."

Michael began to flip through the books, eyes wide. Ben felt mean for dragging him away from them, but they had to get to the quarry. He unpinned the articles from his wall and put them in a folder. He had Michael hold it while they rode to meet their friends.

010 didn't show any emotion on his face when Bill gave him the book. He stared at the cover for so long Bill began to think he didn't like it. Then 010 spoke.

"Thank you, Bill." Bill's heart filled up. He smiled at 010.

"You're welcome."

By 5:10, Richie and his friends had all arrived at the Quarry. "Where the fuck is your brother?" said Eddie. Richie shrugged.

"He said him and his friends were going to Will's to look for him," he said. "Apparently Eleven saw him there or something."

"What's her power again?" said Ben.

"No fucking idea."

By 5:20, Mike and the others finally showed up.

"Did you go home and get dinner first?" asked Richie.

“Shut up, Richie.”

Ben started off the meeting once everyone was sat down. “So, as some of you guys know, I didn’t have any friends when I first moved here, so I spent all my time in the library.” He picked up the folder he brought from home. “One thing that interested me was missing cases. There weren’t a lot until just recently, but there were some. The most were in the 1970s.” Ben opened up the folder and took out the articles.

“There were only three missing cases in the 1970s. All of them were shut down within the first month.” He handed the first newspaper clipping to Beverly, who was sat next to him. “The first one reported missing was Michael Hanlon.”

“The second person reported missing was Stanley Uris.” Ben handed that article over to Bill and Eddie. 010 was completely still.

“The third was Jane Ives.” Ben handed the paper to Richie and Mike.

“Are these...?” said Beverly. Ben nodded.

“All of the stories are almost exactly the same. The mother was a part of this experiment. When she had a baby she claimed it was stolen, all by the same man.”

“So this must be where they took Will and Georgie,” said Mike. Ben shook his head.

“See, I thought so too. But the siblings were taken when they were young. Jane was just born, Michael was 2 and Stanley was almost 5.”

“Well that could still count for Georgie, right?” said Beverly.

“Well, I checked the years back for similar cases, and all of them say the children go missing at 5 or younger,” said Ben.

“So there’s more of them?” said Lucas. Suddenly everyone’s heads perked up. There was a police siren in the distance. The group became silent, listening.

“Do you think someone went missing?” Dustin said quietly.

“They doh-don’t use sirens,” said Bill. They were quiet again.

“Someone probably just got hurt,” said Richie after a minute. No one believed him.

They all tried to ignore the siren, though it became increasingly close. It was working until it sounded like it was right next to them, then stopped.

The group got up to look over the edge of the cliff. Parked at the edge of the lake were two police cars, an ambulance, and a fire truck. The sheriff’s car drove in seconds later. They were pulling something in from the water.

“What the fuck is going on?” asked Richie. Everyone’s hearts were pounding.

Time stopped for the group of kids. There’s a moment frozen in time where you could see exactly where things went from bad to horrible, where lives would change forever. It was the exact moment they all realized who was being pulled out of the Quarry. Not some drunk guy on a bet, not a stupid teenager, not even Bill’s little brother. It was Will Byers.

The group didn’t even react by the time Mike was running down the hill. Dustin and Lucas followed after him, Richie and Jane on their heels.

“Is that Will?” said Eddie. Everyone knew the answer but no one said it out loud.

Bill couldn’t breathe. If Will was dead, what did that mean for Georgie? What if he really was just stuck in a sewer drain, never to be found?

Michael felt his anxiety before it got too bad. He turned to him, grabbing his hand tight. Before Bill could begin to cry out of panic, Michael calmed him down as best he could.

Stanley didn’t completely understand what was going on. The body down there didn’t show up as anything. Dead things usually show up a lighter blue than everything else, but this one just melted into the

background.

Mike showed up first to the edge of the lake, hiding behind the fire truck. The four stopped right behind him, watching with wide eyes.

There's a moment burned into Mike's mind, even to this day. It's when he realized Will was dead. When the firemen pulled him out of the lake and put him on a gurney. He was wet and limp, wearing that bright orange vest he'd owned since 5th grade and Jonathan's hand-me-downs. But the thing Mike will never forget is Will's face. He looked calm and blank, and it made Mike sick to his stomach.

"It's not Will," said Mike, knowing he was wrong. "It can't be." They were all quiet, watching the fire men collect him out of the water.

"It's Will," Lucas said quietly. "It's really Will."

Mike began to breathe heavy, turning away. "Mike..." Jane said softly.

"Mike?" Mike snapped. "'Mike' what?" Jane opened her mouth to explain. "You were supposed to help us find him alive. You said he was alive! Why did you lie to us?" Jane began to panic. "What's wrong with you?"

"Mike-" Richie interrupted, seeing Jane was close to tears.

"Shut up, Richie!" said Mike. "Now's not the time for one of your fucking jokes, alright!" He looked at all of them before turning and running up the hill.

"Mike, come on. Don't do this, man," said Lucas, tears on his face. "Mike."

"Mike, where are you going?" said Dustin. "Mike!"

Mike rode home alone, not giving the others an explanation of what happened. Richie took Jane home, Dustin and Lucas leaving just as quickly.

Richie snuck Jane into the basement before entering through the front door to see his mom hugging a sobbing Mike. There were two

police men in the living room with Nancy, but he paid them no mind. He just hugged his brother as hard as he could, along with his mom. It was all he could do.

In the basement, Jane was sat in her bed, tear tracks still on her face. Mike came down, not even glancing in her direction. He sat at the couch, looking through Will's drawing of their campaigns. Jane stared at him, trying to think of what to say. Then picked up the radio and began to flick through the channels.

The static began to grow on Mike's nerves. He looked up from the papers. "Can you please stop that?" said Mike, anger in his voice. Jane turned off the radio.

When Mike looked back down, Jane turned the radio back on. Mike looked at her, annoyed. "Are you deaf?" Jane continued.

"I though we were friends, y'know? But friends tell each other the truth, and they definitely don't lie to each other." Jane looked up at Mike, radio still screeching. "You made me think Will was okay, that he was still out there, but he wasn't! He wasn't." Jane tried to think of a response but kept her mouth shut. Mike turned back to the drawings.

"Maybe you thought you were helping, but you weren't. You hurt me. Do you understand?" He looked at Jane. "What you did sucks." He shook his head. "Lucas was right about you all along."

Jane turned back to the radio. Then, finally, Will began to sing.

Notes for the Chapter:

also i changed my url it's gaymikehanlon come say
hey